

for laden animals at all seasons of the year. This was the route by which I had wished to travel, but in summer the Yarkand River would probably be impassable for baggage animals. From Serai, they told me, there was an easy route over the Ushdir Pass, practicable for laden animals (except after a heavy fall of snow), separating, on the west side of the pass, into two tracks, one of which went to Ilisu and the other to Mazar Sultan. The valley in which Camps 135 and 136 were situated, known to Tajiks as Misgan, or Miskan, was called Misgar by the Kirghiz. Tahir Beg and the Kirghiz had tried to reach Raskam by the Fortash route, but had failed owing to the deep snow on the Kokoi Kochkar Pass. Across the high snow-clad range between Kulan Urgi and Raskam there was no route. The Kirghiz, I was surprised to find, preferred the Misgar route to that by Bazar Dara; they disliked the fords of the Yarkand River between Bazar Dara and Surukwat, and would never travel by that route in winter unless when accompanying me. I asked my host how the Chinese authorities regarded the visits of Europeans, and he assured me that they had sent strict orders that any British traveller who might visit their neighbourhood should be hospitably received and assisted. In my case the Kirghiz heartily carried out these instructions, not for any reason personal to myself, but on account of my nationality, and also on account of their pleasant memories of Younghusband. The ex-Beg frequently asked me for news of this distinguished traveller, who, he told me, was affectionately remembered and held in great respect among them.

On issuing from the tent I found the caravan waiting for me, and, having journeyed for a short distance, we camped at Kizil. In the evening Islam returned from his mission to Tashkurghan, bringing thirty sarrs (about eighty rupees) which he had borrowed for me. He re-